



Client-responsive solutions
when you need them most

ROSE HUBBARD

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Experience and sensitivity
in all matters of family law

“The emotional cost of litigation is often greater than the legal and financial costs. Especially in family law, clients have to make decisions that will affect their lives and their children’s lives for a long time. I spend a great deal of time listening to my clients to discuss and develop options. These options may not be ones that the court would order, but they work for the client. Nearly 95% of my cases settle prior to a final hearing.”

- **Divorce**
- **Custody**
- **Trials**
- **Spousal support**
- **Child support**
- **Adoptions**
- **Paternity**
- **Visitations**
- **Tax planning**
- **Wills**
- **Probate**

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1,200,000 marriages...

...that's about how many end up in divorce every year in the United States. No one likes the idea of divorce. Even in the best of circumstances, the process is painful. If someone you know is undergoing separation or divorce, the following suggestions may help them cope with the stress. Feel free to photocopy and share these ideas.

1. Think first of each child's present and future emotional and mental well-being before acting. This will be difficult, but you must try your best. Your actions will make the transition easier on your child, and will also be evidence of your ability as a parent.

2. Maintain your composure and emotional balance as much as possible. Remember, it is not the end of the world. Laugh when you can and try to keep a sense of humor. What your children see in your attitude will be reflected in theirs.

3. Allow yourself and your children time for readjustment. Convalescence from an emotional operation, such as a dissolution of marriage, is essential.

4. Remember the best parts of your marriage with your children. Use these memories constructively.

5. Assure your children that they are not to blame for the break up and that they are not being rejected or abandoned. Children, especially the younger ones, often mistakenly feel they have done something wrong and believe that the problems in the family are the result of their own misdeeds. Small children may feel that their actions or secret wishes caused trouble between their parents. Explain to them that there are many other children whose parents have been divorced and that they are not going to lose their mom or dad.

6. Continuing anger or bitterness toward your former partner can injure your children far more than the dissolution itself.

7. Refrain from criticizing the other parent. This is hard, but absolutely necessary. Continuing respect for both parents is vital to your children's development.

8. Do not force or encourage your children to take sides. Doing so will only cause frustration, guilt, and resentment.

9. Try not to upset the children's routine too abruptly. Children need a sense of continuity and it is disturbing to them if they must cope with too many changes all at once.

10. Dissolution of marriage often leads to financial pressures on both parents. When there is a financial crisis, the parent's first impulse may be to keep the children from realizing it. Often, they would rather make sacrifices themselves than ask the child to do so. The atmosphere is healthier when there is frankness and when children are expected to help. But remember that children are children, and should not be expected to handle adult problems.

11. Marriage breakdown is always hard on the children. They may not always show their distress or immediately realize what this will mean to them. Parents should be direct and simple in telling children what is happening and why, and in a way a child

can understand and digest. This will vary with the circumstances and with each child's age and comprehension. The worst approach is to hush things up and make a child feel he must not talk or think about the situation. Unpleasant happenings need brief, prompt, direct, and honest explanations.

12. The guilt parents may feel about the marriage breakdown may interfere in their disciplining the children. A child needs consistent control and direction. Overpermissive parents, who leave a child at the mercy of every passing whim and impulse, interfere with a child's healthy development. Children need and want to know what is expected of them. They need strong leadership and gentle authority. Parents must be ready to say "no" when necessary.

13. Do not overlook the fact that you are only human and admit it. No one is (or ever will be) the "perfect parent." If you make a mistake, acknowledge it and resolve to improve each day.

14. Read and reread these basic guidelines. Add to them by writing down your own constructive approaches to handling your new life. When practicable, discuss your feelings and thoughts with people you trust, and benefit by sharing their positive attitudes.

Provided courtesy of:
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